

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 IO-11 /074 W

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5117

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMDXBASSY TAIPEI NIACT IMMEDIATE 608

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0210

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH

SUBJECT: HAU KUO-FENG NAMED PRC ACTING PREMIER

1. PRC FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT CONFIRMED TO REUTERS LATE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 7 THAT POLITBURO MEMBER, VICE PREMIER, AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY HAU KUO-FENG HAS BEEN NAMED PRC BFT-ING PREMIER. ORAL CONFIRMATION FOLLOWED PRESS INQUIRIES STIMULATED BY HONG KONG SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST STORY EARLIER IN DAY AND PROVIDED NO INFORMATION ON ANY OTHER CHANGES.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT COMES AS CONSIDERABLE SURPRISE SINCE MOST OBSERVERS HAD ASSUMED THAT VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING WOULD BE ELEVATED TO THE PREMIERSHIP TO REPLACE CHOU EN-LAI. CHOU HAD APPARENTLY BEEN GROOMING TENG TO TAKE OVER THE PREMIERSHIP FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE FACT THAT TENG WAS NOT NAMED PREMIER MUST BE INTERPRETED AS A SET-BACK AT LEAST, IF NOT A PERMANENT LOSS, IN WHAT PRESUMABLY HAS BEEN A MAJOR STRUGGLE IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER THE SUCCESSOR TO CHOU. WE KNOW TOO LITTLE AT THIS POINT TO ASSESS CONFIDENTALLY THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE TENG'S DEFEAT, BUT SOME PEKING OBSERVERS HAVE LINKED IT TO A NOTIC-CONFIDENTIAL

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EABLY HARSHER TONE IN RECENT PEOPLE'S DAILY PIECES AND SUGGEST

THAT THE POLITICAL DIALOG IN PEKING MAY HAVE SHIFTED LEFTWARD.

3. THE FIFTY-SIX YEAR OLD HAU KUO-FENG IS A NATIVE OF HUNAN PROVINCE--AS IS CHAIRMAN MAO--AND SPENT MANY YEARS THERE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS. HUA REMAINED IN POWER AS HUNAN'S LEADER, THROUGH THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND SINCE MID-1971 HE HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME WORKING IN PEKING. HUA WAS APPOINTED TO THE POLITBUREAU IN AUGUST 1973 AND MADE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY IN JANUARY 1975. HE HAS BEEN CONSIDERED ONE OF THE PRC'S RISING YOUNGER STARS AND ITS LEADING SPECIALIST ON AGRICULTURE.
THAYER

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